

STARTING A JOB CLUB



Job clubs are small, facilitated groups that meet regularly to assist members in their search for employment. These collaborative groups foster networking, offer moral support, and can provide a wide variety of job search

assistance. Some job clubs have an educational component in which useful job search skills are taught by the facilitator or invited speakers. While workforce professionals may serve as facilitators for job clubs, many are successfully led by volunteers from faith- or community-based organizations.

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If you want to start a job club for your participants, there are several steps you can take to facilitate the process:

☞ **Define the purpose of the job club.** Because the purpose of the club will drive the rest of your decisions, you want to clarify the reasons for starting one. You'll want to determine what the job club will do and who will it serve. Will the club focus on enhancing job search skills or will its primary purpose be networking and sharing job leads? Will you invite all of your participants to attend or will you have groups based on the credential acquired by participants? Clarity of purpose will help in making the decisions that follow.

☞ **Investigate other job clubs.** There may be a job club in your community that meets the needs of your participants. If there is, you may want to partner with that job club and leverage resources. If the local job club or clubs do not meet your needs, it is still a good idea to speak to their organizers and, perhaps, attend one or two of their sessions. There may be opportunities to work together, lessons to learn,

or materials to borrow that can pave the way for the successful implementation of your job club. The U.S. Department of Labor's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP) initiative maintains a database of job clubs by state at <https://partnerships.workforce3one.org/page/resources/1001107639349545113>.

☞ **Form a small design team.** It is helpful to have a small team of two to three committed people to help in the design, decision-making, and implementation process. They should be tasked with creating the organization's policy and procedure guidelines for the job club, proposing and developing partnerships in support of it, acquiring the needed resources, and publicizing it. It is important to have either one person or a small group who is committed to planning and conducting the job club to ensure continuity.



☞ **Join the Community of Practice.** There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The CFBNP community of practice has tools, materials, and information that can help you design and implement your club. (<https://partnerships.workforce3one.org/page/job-clubs>). We've listed other sources of information on starting a job club in the resource section of the bulletin.

☞ **Form partnerships.** Partnerships with a One-Stop Career Center, community-based organizations, and faith-based groups can help start the job club and provide resources and ideas. They may be able to provide space that is convenient



to your club's participants, guest speakers, and other forms of support beyond the scope or resources of your training program.

☞ **Name the job club.** You want to give your club a name that reflects its purpose and helps establish its brand. It should give a clear message that connects to your target audience and conveys your agency's ability to meet their needs.

☞ **Establish a consistent meeting day, time, and place.** You'll want to consider transportation needs and the availability of your target members as you plan when and where to meet. Meeting once a week is ideal, and the meeting should be at least an hour and not longer than two. You should allow sufficient time for everyone to participate. The schedule of the meeting can affect its purpose. Meetings at the beginning of the week tend to focus on motivating participants for the days ahead, and meetings at the end of the week provide more of an opportunity to review job search efforts.

☞ **Establish parameters.** You'll need to decide how many people you will accept into the club. Groups should be small enough to allow everyone the opportunity to speak and large enough to create the synergy needed for success.

☞ **Find or train a facilitator.** A good facilitator is important to ensure that meetings stay on track and everyone has the chance to participate and benefit from the club. Ideally, the facilitator should have workforce development



experience. He or she should have good leadership skills and be comfortable speaking in front of a group.

☞ **Publicize the job club.** Even a well-designed job club will not succeed if it does not attract a sufficient number of participants. You'll need to conduct outreach to ensure that your target population knows about the club and how it may help them. If your program is using social media, consider setting up a LinkedIn group or Facebook page for job club participants where

they can share their experiences between sessions.

Our next Bulletin will examine some promising practices for conducting a job club and provide you with guidance for making your job club a success.

OTHER RESOURCES

☞ *Encouraging Partnerships between the Workforce Investment System and Job Clubs to meet Career and Employment Needs* (Training and Employment Notice No. 42-10)
http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=3026

☞ *Two Heads Are Better Than One: A Guide to Forming a Job Club*
http://labor.idaho.gov/publications/Job_ClubWorkbook.pdf